

Opinions

Your Right To Say It

Thanks for your support

To the Editor:
I am a seventh grade language arts teacher at Kings Mountain Middle School.

During the 1993-94 school year, the students on my team participated in the Accelerated Reader program. The students worked hard and accomplished much more than I ever expected, earning almost 5400 points as a team and having 100 percent participation in the program.

I would like to direct portions of this letter to several different groups and individuals.

First, to the 93-94 Sea Creature students: I am extremely proud of the work you did this year with the Accelerated Reader program. I am proud of you not only for your individual reading records but also for the way you pulled together as a team to be sure that each member met our team goal. You earned your reward day and I hope you had fun. I have watched you grow as readers and have seen many of you become "turned on to reading." I even saw some of you who declared that you "hated" to read reach for library books and read without being asked. Because of your excellent reading records, we had 14 students with year-end English averages of 100 or better. Congratulations, and don't stop reading.

Next, to the parents of those students: Thank you for your support this year. I know from talking to you and your students that much was accomplished due to your efforts outside of school. I know of parents who insisted that their students read regularly and provide quiet time and reading material. I also know of parents who gave their time so that the students could read aloud to them and of parents that took their turns at reading aloud to the students. There was much discussion about the books to be sure students understood the material before they took the computer tests. Thank you for teaching your children that reading is important.

To the other Sea Creature teachers: Our kids accomplished much more than they might otherwise have because of your cooperation and emphasis on the program. Thanks for allowing extra trips to the library from your classes, for allowing time in your classes for sustained silent reading, for allowing students to partner up and read to each other, and for celebrating each small success with the students.

To the area businesses that contributed prizes for our Accelerated Reader store: Thank you for the coupons, pencils, pens, hats, stickers, shirts, posters, tickets and the monetary donations. Knowing that their earned points could be used to buy prizes added extra excitement to the program.

Finally, to Principal John Goforth: thanks for your support of our program. When I first had the idea for you to "dress" for the kids, I never imagined you'd agree and then make good on your promise. To say that the Sea Creature students, and their teachers, enjoyed Johnnie's visit would indeed be an understatement. Thanks for being such a good sport.

I look forward to continued success next year.

Penny Canipe

Cartoonitorial



This is an artist's drawing of the proposed outside of the new Kings Mountain Little Theatre, which will be located in the old Dixie Theatre building on Railroad Avenue. Thus far, pledges of over \$120,000 toward the \$300,000 project have been received. The building will not only be used for KMLT productions but also for community meetings and activities. Anyone wishing to donate may call Dr. Scott Mayse or Andy Neisler, co-chairmen of the fund-raising effort.

Our View

Work Together To Solve Problems

Call it a negative cash flow, lack of funds, bankrupt, busted, or whatever you want to call it, but the city of Kings Mountain is in a serious financial crunch.

It is not panic time, however. The situation can be fixed but it must be faced responsibly.

Thus far, some city officials seem to be more interested in placing blame than correcting the situation.

In recent months, small town politics has figured prominently into many discussions - and possibly even some decisions - at City Hall. Small town politics is nothing new, but enough is enough.

Kings Mountain's money problems go back several years, and no one is to blame for them. They were a result of a bad economic year which resulted in expenditures exceeding revenue.

Although some city officials would like the public to believe the current money crunch was created in recent months, they know deep down inside that the State Treasurer's Office (or Local Government Commission, if you prefer) has been on their case for years to improve their fund balances.

The state strongly suggests that a city have 8% of its general fund appropriations in reserve in case of emergencies. Kings Mountain's percentage has been below eight for at least three years, and had the city not robbed Peter to pay Paul (by transferring funds from utility budgets to the general fund) it would have been operating with a negative cash flow.

In fact, it has been operating with a negative cash flow because paying bills up to two months late has become a common practice. As of last week, the city had just over \$300,000 in the bank but owed over \$600,000. Anyone with basic math skills can tell you that means you're in the hole.

The city's 1994-95 proposed budget is approximately \$18 million. Of that, about \$4.5 million is general fund. The eight percent reserve funds requested by the state would be approximately \$400,000, which is not a whole lot of money when you're dealing with millions.

With the proposed four-cent property tax rate hike and continued freeze on spending and hiring, the city can improve its financial picture substantially in the next fiscal year, and barring any unforeseen emergencies should be able to begin to build its reserve funds to the suggested level within two years.

This cannot be accomplished, though, through throwing stones and playing the "if Council had done this and if Council had done that" game. But it can be accomplished through forgetting the past and working together for the future of Kings Mountain. If our leaders aren't willing to do that, it is indeed time for some changes.

Written guidelines needed to prevent future oversights

The recent flap over awards day at Kings Mountain Middle School was unfortunate - for the school and the child involved.

A seventh grader whose mother is often outspoken about school issues felt humiliated when she did not receive Highest Academic Achievement Awards despite having the highest grade averages in several subjects.

Principal John Goforth said the matter was a result of some teachers using one set of criteria and others using another. Some teachers, he said, judged Highest Achievement to mean the students with the highest grades while others judged it to mean students who made the most significant gains.

When the mother protested the school decided to correct the situation because there were no guidelines given to the teachers before they made the selections.

We would hate to think that anyone would retaliate against a child for something a parent has said or done, and we will give the school the benefit of the doubt even though this child qualified for - and later received - eight awards.

But, this is something that should never happen again.

Before another awards day rolls around, all Kings Mountain District schools should have written guidelines for teachers and other awards presenters to follow when making their selections for awards given by the schools. In our opinion, the term "Highest Academic

Society is protecting criminals, not crime victims

"Go away and be a good little victim," is the message sent by the North Carolina criminal justice system to crime victims. In the first survey of its kind, the N.C. Victim Assistance Network surveyed 507 victims who applied for compensation from the state's victim compensation fund between 1989 and 1991.

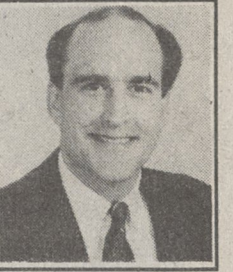
The results were quite startling. Over half of the victims were "very dissatisfied" with the criminal justice system. Fifty percent weren't told their cases were plea bargained before a deal was made. Twenty-five percent were never even contacted by the prosecutor's office. Even more disturbing, half of the victims were never notified that their assailants were released before trial. Although N.C. law allows a victim to make an "impact statement" to the court, only 22 percent of victims received a chance to make such a statement.

The plight of victims is finally receiving some acknowledgement within the system. At the recent Victim Assistance Network conference in Raleigh, Chief Justice James Exum of the N.C. Supreme Court admitted that the system can be too legalistic and can emphasize legal issues more than victims.

One proposal to improve the system is now before state politicians. The plan would place at least three victim assistants in all 39 district attorneys' offices. The assistants would have separate jobs - one would tend to witness, another to child victims and the third would help the victims of violent crimes. This is a

REFLECTIONS on Religion and Life

Rev. Dick Newsome
Pastor
First Presbyterian Church



Our Strength

On the bottom floor of Lakeside High School in Atlanta, Georgia is a room I loved to hate. It is the ninth grade English room. There I once was forced to become acquainted with some of the great classics of Western literature - "Beowulf, William Tell, A Tale of Two Cities" and the like. I was forced to listen for profound thoughts from great minds while the rest of the human race (or so it seemed) took part in other, more enjoyable activities.

As the ninth grade year progressed, however, I surprised myself by finding an occasional piece of literature interesting. And one of those pieces which startled me and caused me to think was Shakespeare's "Hamlet." This young Danish prince, beset by problems on every side of life, seemed a fascinating character. His thoughts seemed a little richer than the average "guest" of classic literature. His reflections struck me as decidedly deep.

Of all the subjects of these princely musings, the subject of human nature and value most captivated me. And it did so because this most unusual play offers as full a scope of views as is possible.

In one breath the human creature is the very crowning achievement of creation.

"What a piece of work is a man! How noble is reason! how infinite in faculty! in form, in moving, how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god!" (II, ii, 317).

In another breath the human is barely more than a beast.

"What should such fellows as I do crawling between heaven and earth? We are arrant knaves, all." (III, i, 128).

Could it be that Hamlet is correct on both counts? During the past few weeks, we have watched Hamlet's words enacted on the soap opera of television. We have seen firsthand the rise and fall of one of our sports greats, O.J. Simpson.

Since the night of his bizarre drive down a Los Angeles interstate to his elegant home and eventual arrest, I have listened to many voices speak about the murder of his wife and her friend. I have heard every kind of comment from anger to denial. But of all the reactions, the one which has come to surface more than any other is that of shock and wonder. Could a man who had so much in his favor do something so horrible as a double murder? Could a man be so wonderful and so despicable?

As of this writing, Simpson's fate in court has not been declared. But regardless of the outcome of his trial, we realize to our horror that such a thing possibly could happen. We are reminded sadly that even in the best of us is a dark, forbidding side.

When that realization comes to us - as it does sooner or later - we must ask ourselves wherein our strength lies. In the best of hopes, we realize that despite our sin, God loves us and cares for us endlessly. In the best of hopes, we may echo the words of our reflective Prince Hamlet:

"There's a divinity that shapes our ends, Rough-hew them how we will." (V, ii, 10)

KM Weather Report

(Compiled by Kenneth Kitzmiller)

	June 22-28	Last year
Total precipitation	3.11	Trace
Maximum one day	2.01 (26)	Tr.(21,26,28)
Year to date	31.66	30.13
Minimum temperature	64 (26)	65 (27)
Maximum temperature	94 (22)	96 (28)
Average temperature	77.7	79.4

HERALD LETTER POLICY

The Herald welcomes your letters to the editor for publication in each Thursday's paper. The following guidelines apply:

Keep your letters brief and to the point. Type and double space them, if possible; if not write legibly. Letters or guest columns containing more than 600 words will not be accepted.

All letters must be signed in ink and include the full name, address and telephone number of the author for verification purposes.

The Herald reserves the right to edit letters for length, spelling, good taste, clarity, libel, slander or any other reason; and reserves the right to reject any letter for any reason.

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GARY STEWART
Editor

Achievement" means highest grade. If that's not the case and it's available to anyone who makes significant gains the term "High Academic Achievement" or simply "Academic Achievement" is more fitting.

As we've said on these pages many times before, former City Manager George Wood was one of the best things to ever happen to Kings Mountain. He came to town in 1988 and faced a myriad of problems, but through hard work and the support of the citizenry the town solved most of them.

One thing that Mr. Wood pushed for - but never got the necessary backing to accomplish - was that he wanted all utilities to stand on their own two feet.

As pointed out by the Local Government Commission in several letters to the city over the past three fiscal years, the single most contributing factor to Kings Mountain's present financial crunch is that too much money is taken from the electric and gas funds to supplement other areas of the city budget.

GUEST COLUMN
THOMAS GOOLSBY
Carolina Syndicated Columns

workable idea - one that we must not allow our politicians to forget or overlook.

It is so easy to forget the victims of crime. For murder victims, part of the reason is that "dead men tell no tales," but for the others the answer probably rests in the indomitable human spirit. Like most of us, they prefer to put the past bad memories behind them and get on with their lives. One reason that victims seem so easily forgotten maybe that the rest of us feel too uncomfortable dwelling on the fact that "there, but by the grace of God, go we."

Regardless of the reasons, for the sake of today's victims and the victims-yet-to-be, we must not allow their suffering and their needs to go unmet. If the state should go out of its way to see that any person has his or her needs met, it is the crime victims - not the criminals - they are the ones whom society has failed to protect. There, but by the grace of God, go we.